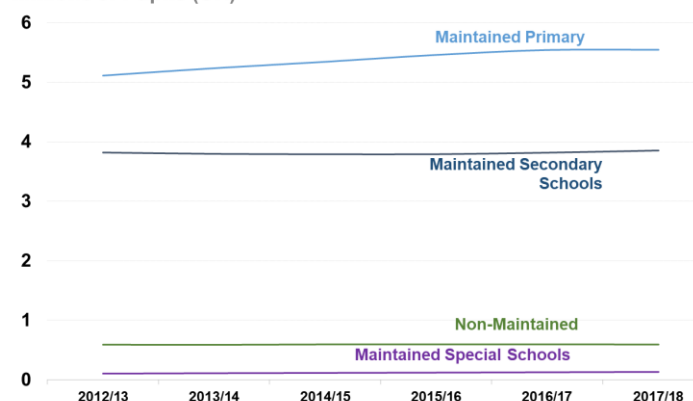




## Pupil numbers increasing, but at a lower rate

Millions of Pupils (UK)



The overall number of pupils in the UK has increased by 43,000 from 10,259,800 in 2016/17 to 10,302,900 in 2017/18. This represents an increase of 0.4%. This is a smaller increase than seen in previous years, with increases of 1.1 to 1.2% year on year since 2012/13. The historical increase was driven mostly by increases in pupils in primary schools, but the increase between 2016/17 and 2017/18 is driven by an increase in pupils in secondary schools.

## Attainment at end of compulsory schooling

This publication includes numbers of pupils, schools and teachers up to 2017/18, alongside the performance amongst pupils at the end of compulsory schooling against national measures up to 2016/17. The headline measure for England has changed from previous publications with the introduction of Attainment 8 scores. Due to differences in the qualifications across the UK, direct comparisons are not advised and should not be used as a comparison of system quality.

### In England

The average Attainment 8 score per pupil in 2017 is 44.6. This has decreased by 3.9 points since 2016. The average Attainment 8 score per pupil has decreased in comparison to 2016 but this change is as expected when compared to 2016 data with the 2017 point score scale applied.

### In Wales

In 2016/17, 54.6% of pupils in their final year of compulsory schooling (typically aged 16) achieved 5 or more GCSE or equivalent passes at grade A\*-C including English and mathematics (NQF Level 2) including those who passed as part of a retake. Due to significant methodology changes, this figure is not directly comparable to previous years.

### In Northern Ireland

In 2016/17, 70.3% of pupils in their last year of compulsory schooling in grant-aided mainstream schools (typically aged 16) achieved 5 or more GCSE or equivalent passes at grade A\*-C including English and mathematics (NQF Level 2), including those who passed as part of a retake. This has increased from 67.9% in 2015/16.

### In Scotland

In 2016/17, 61.2% of school leavers (those who leave school at the end of the academic year who could be between 16 and 18 and at various stages in their education) from maintained schools obtained one or more qualifications at SCQF Level 6 or better. This has decreased from 61.7% in 2015/16.

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## In this publication

The following tables are included in the publication:

- Education and Training Statistics for the United Kingdom 2018 (UKETS\_2018\_Tables.xls)

The accompanying technical information provides information on the education systems in the UK and their data sources.

## Feedback

We are changing how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at

[internationalevidence.statistics@education.gov.uk](mailto:internationalevidence.statistics@education.gov.uk)

# 1. Schools, pupils and teachers (Tables 1.1 – 1.4)

## Schools (Table 1.1)

Section 1 provides an overview of the total numbers of schools, pupils and teachers across the UK<sup>1</sup>.

In academic year 2017/18, there were 32,117 schools across the UK (Figure 1.1). Primary schools accounted for 65% (20,863) of all schools; secondary schools 13% (4,190); and nursery schools 9% (3,037). Schools in England constitute 76% of the UK total, with an additional 16% in Scotland, 5% in Wales and 4% in Northern Ireland.

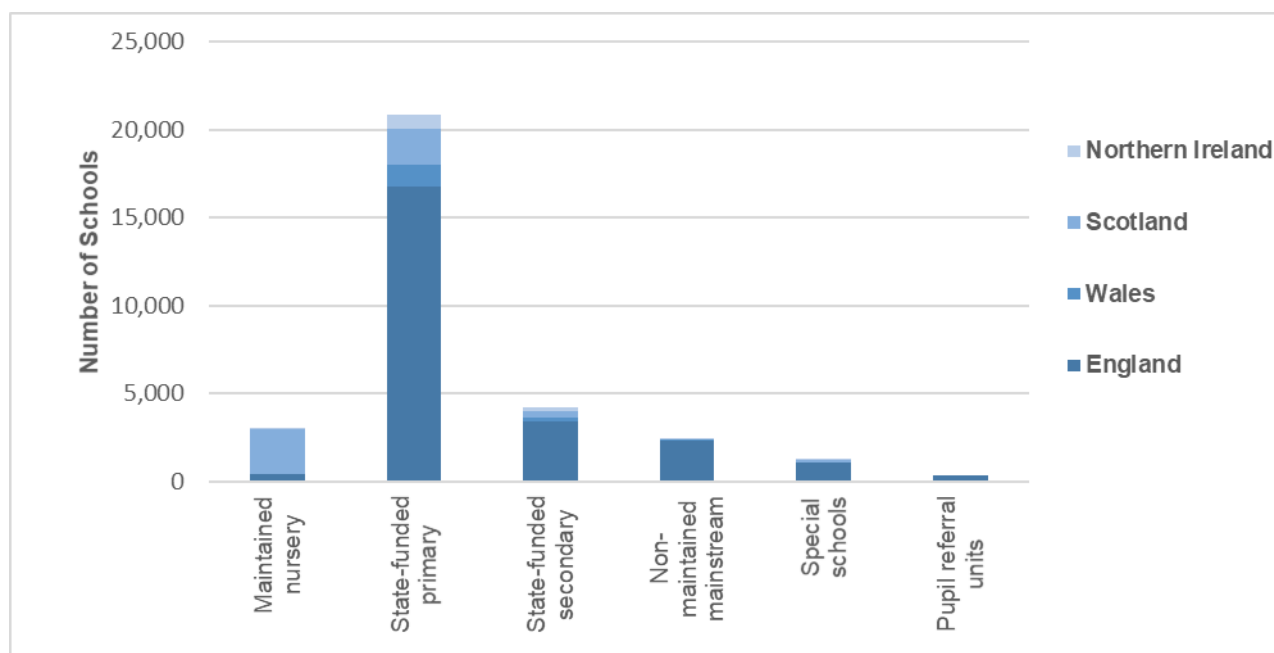
**Figure 1.1 Number of schools in the UK by school type (2017/18)**

School Type	Number of Schools	Percentage of Schools
Nursery	3,037	9%
Primary	20,863	65%
Middle	13	0%
Secondary	4,190	13%
Non-maintained mainstream	2,404	7%
Special schools	1,258	4%
Pupil referral units	352	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,117</b>	<b>100%</b>

The total number of schools across the UK has remained stable, increasing by 4 in the last year. This contributes to a total decline of 284 schools (0.9%) since 2012/13

The stability in absolute school numbers from 2016/17 is shown across most types and phases of school. From 2012/13 to 2017/18 the number of secondary schools has increased by 113 (2.8%) to 4,190, driven by an increase in secondary schools in England only. The number of primary schools decreased by 206 (1.0%) over the period 2012/13 to 2017/18. Figure 1.2 shows the numbers of schools by type across the four UK countries in 2017/18.

**Figure 1.2: Number of schools across the UK by type and country (2017/18)**



<sup>1</sup> This publication covers all schools across the UK where appropriate data sources exist. This includes non-maintained, or independent, schools. In chapter 1, the figures cover maintained and non-maintained schools across England, Wales and Northern Ireland but only maintained schools in Scotland.

## Pupils (Tables 1.2, 1.2.1, 1.2.2)

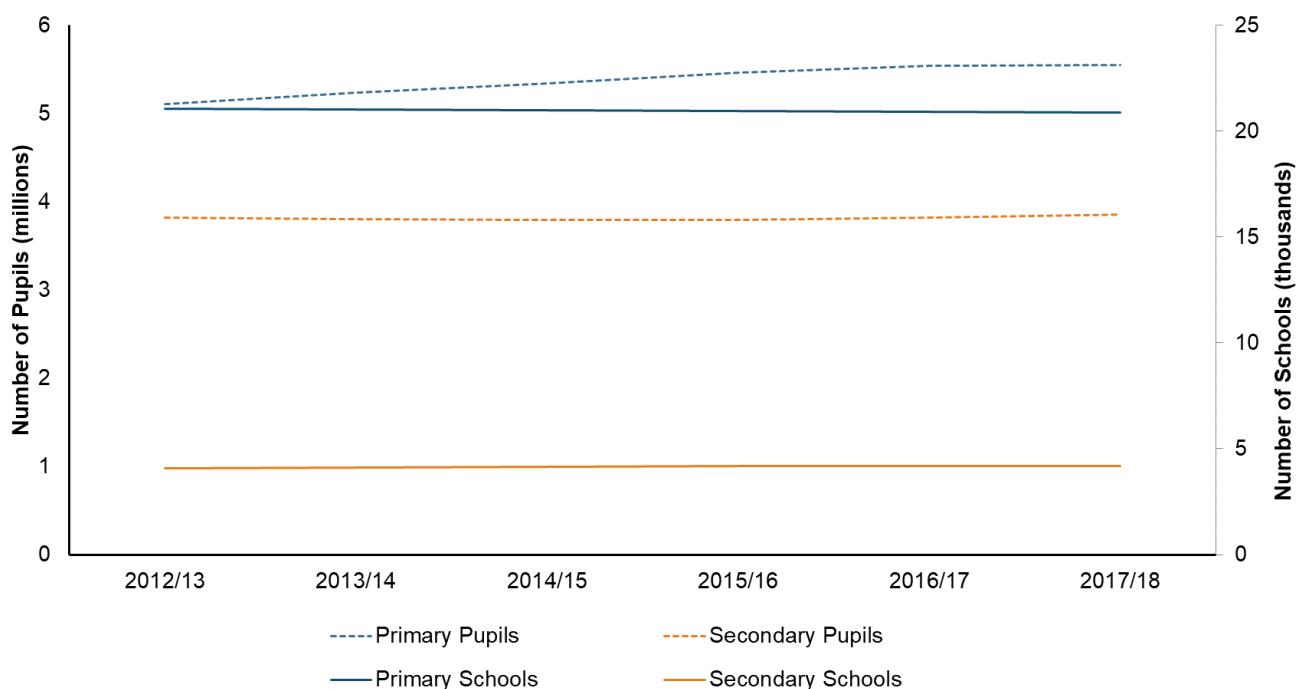
Within the maintained sector, the number of primary school pupils continued to increase, by 4,000 (0.1%) from 2016/17 to 5.5 million pupils in 2017/18. This continued increase is at a slower rate than the previous year, when it rose by 83,100 (1.5%) The number of secondary school pupils also increased from 2016/17 to 2017/18, by 33,900 (0.9%) to 3.9 million.

Figure 1.3 shows that while the number of primary schools decreased by 206 (1.0%) over the period 2012/13 to 2017/18, the number of primary school pupils increased by 8.6%, from 5.1 million pupils in 2012/13 to 5.5 million pupils in 2017/18.

The number of secondary school pupils has increased overall from 2012/13 by 31,400 (0.8%) to a total of 3.9 million in 2017/18 (Table 1.2.1). Over the same period, the number of secondary schools has also increased by 113 (2.8%) to 4,190 schools (Figure 1.3).

Between 2012/13 and 2017/18 the biggest changes in pupil numbers have been in the number of pupils attending pupil referral units and special schools (Table 1.2.1). The number of pupils in pupil referral units has increased by 4,900 (41.8%) over this period to 16,700 pupils. The number of pupils in maintained special schools has also increased, by 23,700 (22.0%) from 2012/13 to 131,600 pupils in 2017/18, however the number of pupils in non-maintained special schools has decreased by 600 (13.4%) over the same period, to 3,640.

**Figure 1.3: Number of primary and secondary schools and pupils across the UK (2012/13 to 2017/18)**



## Teachers (Tables 1.3 and 1.4)

The total number of full time equivalent (FTE) qualified teachers across the UK has remained steady at 595,900 FTE in 2017/18 (Table 1.3). There has been a decrease in full time teachers of 1,344 (down 0.3%) from 2016/17 to 2017/18, though this has been partly offset by an increase in the full-time equivalent contribution of part-time teachers of 1,417 FTE (1.6% of part time teachers FTE). The number of full-time qualified teachers has decreased in maintained nursery and primary (0.1%) and secondary schools (1.4%) from 2016/17 to 2017/18, whereas the number of full-time qualified teachers has increased in non-maintained (2.0%) and special schools (1.6%) in the last year.

As in previous years, there were more female teachers than male teachers in UK schools. In 2017/18 70% of full-time qualified teachers in the UK were female. 83% of full-time qualified teachers in nursery and primary schools and 59% in secondary schools were female (Table 1.3).

The pupil: teacher ratio across all schools in the UK has increased slightly to 16.4 in 2017/18, from 16.2 in 2016/17 (Table 1.4). The increase is consistent across sectors. Within the public mainstream sector, the pupil: teacher ratio increased to 20.6 in 2017/18 from 20.3 in 2016/17 in primary schools and to 15.6 from 15.3 in secondary schools over the same period.

The pupil: teacher ratio across all schools has increased from 16.2 to 16.4 in England and from 17.8 to 17.9 in Northern Ireland from 2016/17 to 2017/18. A decrease is seen in Scotland from 14.0 to 13.9 and the ratio remained at 18.4 in Wales from 2016/17 to 2017/18.

## 2. Post-compulsory Education (Table 2.1 – 2.5)

### Post-compulsory Education and Training (Tables 2.1, 2.2, 2.2.1 and 2.3-2.5)

Section 2 provides an overview of the total numbers of institutions providing post-compulsory education and training across the UK, as well as total enrolment and full-time academic staff.

Whilst pupils may leave school and enter post-compulsory education at the end of the year when they turn 16 in each of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, pupils in England must remain in education or training until they are 18 (either in full-time education or as an apprentice or trainee, or in part-time education or training alongside 20 hours or more per week of work or volunteering)<sup>2</sup>. Though these students are technically in compulsory education, some have been included in this chapter<sup>3</sup>.

<b>The number of universities across the UK remained the same, while the numbers of Further Education Colleges (FEC) decreased</b>	University numbers have remained stable in the last four years at 142. The last noticeable expansion was in 2012/13, when 9 university colleges were awarded university status. The numbers of Further Education Colleges (FEC) decreased from 381 in 2015/16 to 371 in 2016/17 and has reduced from 402 since 2011/12. This decline in numbers of FECs was evident in England, Wales and Scotland. (Table 2.1).
<b>Number of academic staff decreased at FECs but full-time staff increased at Higher Education Institutions</b>	The number of full-time equivalent academic staff in FECs (including full-time and part-time staff) has decreased from 80,000 in 2012/13 to 66,000 in 2016/17. In Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) the numbers of full-time academic staff have increased from 121,000 in 2012/13 to 138,000 in 2016/17. (Table 2.1).
<b>Participation in post-compulsory education decreased</b>	Participation in the UK has decreased from 4.8 million in 2011/12 to 3.6 million in 2016/17 for further education (FE) programmes. Participation has increased from 2.4 million in 2015/16 to 2.5 million in 2016/17, the same level as in 2012/13 for higher education (HE) programmes. (Table 2.4).

Information on Alternative Providers (APs) of higher education does not feature in the main tables of this publication as UK-wide data is not available. APs are higher education providers who do not receive recurrent funding from the Office for Students (OfS) or other public bodies and which are not FECs. For further information on APs, refer to the section covering higher education in the additional text document.

Figure 2.1 shows the trend in the number of full-time students studying HE from 2012/13 to 2016/17, by level of study. Since 2012/13, there has been an increase of 9.9% in participation on first degrees. Over the same time period, there has also been an increase in participation on postgraduate degrees (8.1%). This has been driven by an increase in participation on Master's degrees of 8.3% over the five-year period, as well as an increase in PhD study of 7.7% over the same period (Table 2.4). The increase in participation over the five year series is part explained by 2012/13 being an atypical year. There were fewer entrants to higher education in 2012/13 due to changes in the tuition fee arrangements in England.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/know-when-you-can-leave-school>

<sup>3</sup> Includes 16-18 year olds on apprenticeships or traineeships, or Education and Training courses at General Further Education Colleges (including Tertiary), Sixth Form Colleges, Special Colleges (Agricultural and Horticultural Colleges and Art and Design Colleges), Specialist Colleges and External Institutions, but not 16-18 learners in Schools or School Sixth forms.

**Figure 2.1 Full-time students in higher education in the UK by level (2011/12 to 2016/17) (thousands)**

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
First Degree	1,319.6	1,351.8	1,358.6	1,407.5	1,449.9
Other Undergraduate	123.6	130.1	122.6	122.2	126.6
Postgraduate Degree	297.0	305.4	305.4	304.9	321.2
of which Masters	225.6	231.1	229.7	229.6	244.4
of which PhD	71.3	74.4	74.7	75.3	76.8

Figure 2.2 shows the trend in participation in part-time HE study from 2012/13 to 2016/17, by level of study. Since 2012/13, there has been a decrease in students studying at every level, although the decline is sharpest for undergraduate courses. This is particularly driven by the numbers studying undergraduate courses other than first degrees, which fell by 37.3% between 2012/13 and 2016/17. (Table 2.4).

**Figure 2.2 Part-time students in higher education in the UK by level (2011/12 to 2016/17) (thousands)**

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
First Degree	229.8	203.6	187.0	177.7	170.6
Other Undergraduate	301.4	227.1	216.9	200.4	188.9
Postgraduate Degree	242.7	237.0	234.7	229.5	232.3
of which Masters	217.3	211.1	207.5	204.7	207.7
of which PhD	25.3	25.9	25.4	24.8	24.6

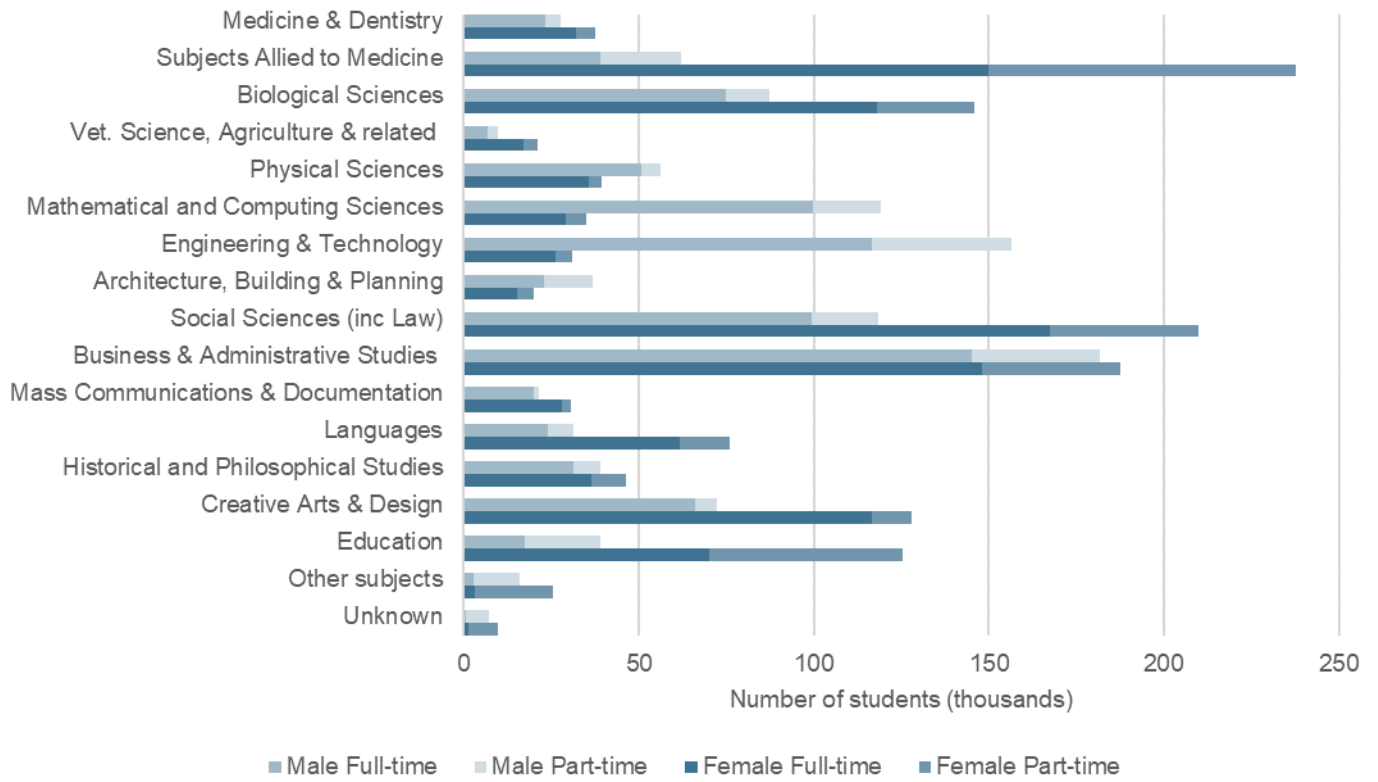
From 2011/12 to 2016/17, participation in part-time study fell for all subjects except Engineering, where numbers rose by 11.2%. The decline was sharpest in subjects related to Languages (44.9%) and Historical and Philosophical Studies (45.4%) (Table 2.2.1).

Figure 2.3 shows that the most popular subject for full-time HE study in the UK in 2016/17 was Business & Administrative Studies, with 293,000 full-time participants. 81.7% of full-time participants in Engineering & Technology, and 77.4% in Mathematical and Computing Sciences, were male; and 80.2% in Education and 79.4% in Subjects Allied to Medicine were female.

The most popular subjects for part-time HE study in the UK in 2016/17 were Subjects Allied to Medicine, Education, and Business & Administrative Studies. For part-time study, 79.1% of participants in Subjects Allied to Medicine were female and 71.7% of participants in Education were female; 89.5% of participants in Engineering & Technology and 76.8% in Mathematical and Computing Sciences were male. Overall, 59.1% of part-time students were female, compared to 55.6% of full-time students. (Table 2.2)

For students in the UK, the most popular subjects for both full-time and part-time students have remained the same for the past 5 years. (Table 2.2.1).

**Figure 2.3: Full- and part-time higher education students by subject and gender (2016/17) (thousands)**

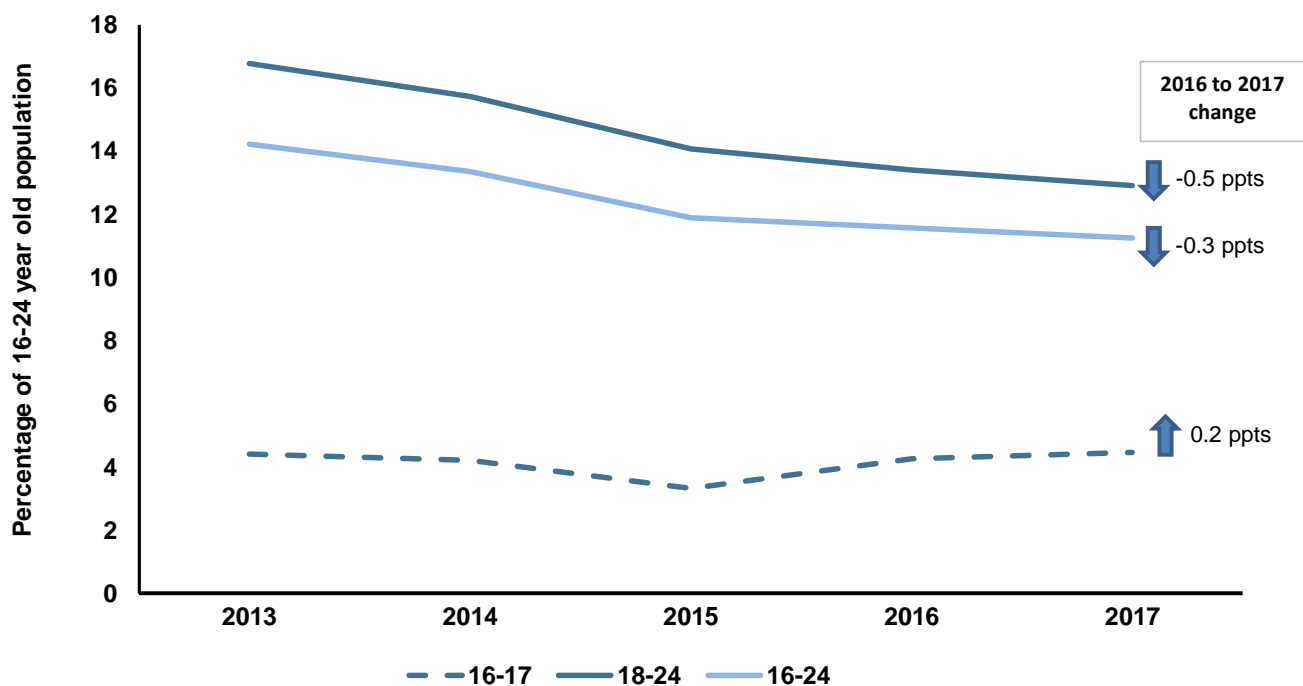




## 16 to 24 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) by age (Table 2.5)

Figure 2.4 shows a fall in the percentage of 16-24 year-olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in the UK between 2013 and 2017, from 14.2% in 2013 to 11.2% in 2017. The NEET rate for 18-24 year olds has fallen each year between 2013 and 2017, from 16.8% in 2013 to 12.9% in 2017, including a 0.5 percentage point (ppt) fall between 2016 and 2017. At age 16-17, the NEET rate fell each year between 2013 and 2015, but between 2015 and 2016 there was a rise of 0.9ppts and from 2016 to 2017 a rise of 0.2ppts, leaving the NEET rate in 2017 (4.5%) higher than in 2013 (4.4%). (Table 2.5).

**Figure 2.4: 16 to 24 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) by age (2013 to 2017)**



### 3. Qualifications (Tables 3.1 – 3.3)

#### Qualifications (Tables 3.1, 3.2 a, b, c and d, 3.3 a, b, c and d, 3.4)

This section takes a closer look at the qualifications pupils at the end of their compulsory schooling have attained, typically at ages 16 and 18<sup>4</sup>.

#### Qualifications at age 16 and 18 in the UK

The qualifications that pupils work towards at the end of their secondary schooling and beyond are determined by the devolved authorities in each of the four UK countries. In England, Northern Ireland and Wales all qualifications can be mapped onto the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which has nine levels from entry level to doctorate (for example, PhD) level. In Scotland all qualifications can be mapped onto the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). See Figure 3.1 below.

In England, new GCSEs in English and mathematics were taught from September 2015 with the first examinations taking place in Summer 2017. New GCSEs in other subjects were phased in for first teaching from September 2016, continuing into 2017 and a very small number from 2018. As part of these reforms, a new grading system was introduced from 2017 to replace the A\* to G system with a new 9 to 1 scale.

In the first year each new GCSE subject is introduced, broadly the same proportion of students will get a grade 7 or above, grade 4 or above, and grade 1 or above as would have got a grade A or above, grade C or above, and grade G or above in the old system.

More details about the 9-1 grading system can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-gcse-9-to-1-grades-coming-soon>

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, pupils commonly take GCSEs at 16 and A levels at 18. GCSEs at grades G to D (1-3 for new GCSEs in England) are equivalent to a Level 1 on the NQF, whilst GCSEs at grades C to A\* (4-9 for new GCSEs in England) are equivalent to a Level 2. A levels at all grades (A to E) are equivalent to a Level 3. The national performance measures used to hold schools to account in England does not include the grades pupils achieved through resits, however, these are included in Wales and Northern Ireland.

New national performance measures were introduced for England in 2015/16. Progress 8 aims to capture the progress a pupil makes from the end of primary school to the end of secondary school. It is a type of value added measure, which means that pupils' results are compared to the actual achievements of other pupils with the same prior attainment at the end of primary school. Attainment 8 measures the achievement of a pupil across eight qualifications including mathematics and English. More information is available in the Progress 8 and Attainment 8 [guidance](#). Gender breakdowns for the previous headline measures are no longer published.

Qualifications in Scotland are based on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). There are 12 levels on the framework, SCQF levels 1 to 7 are covered by school education. The new National qualifications make up SCQF levels 3 to 5. For most young people in Scotland S4 is the last compulsory year of school, but the majority will choose to stay on and complete S5 and S6. Highers (SCQF level 6) are generally taken in S5/S6; Highers, sometimes along with Advanced Highers (SCQF level 7, usually taken in S6) are the qualifications required for entry to Higher Education. School leaver data looks at a pupil's attainment throughout their school education. The leaver cohort is made up of all pupils who leave during or at the end of that year, so it contains pupils who leave at various stages of their schooling. Although Standard Grades (SCQF levels 3 to 5) were not available in 2013/14, the 2013/14 school leaver data will include Standard Grade attainment of leavers who sat these qualifications in earlier years of their schooling. New Highers were phased in in 2014/15 and run concurrently with the previous qualifications. Both sets of qualifications meet the SCQF level 6 standard and are comparable.

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<sup>4</sup> In chapter 3, the figures cover pupils entered for GCSE and A level (or equivalent) qualifications in maintained and non-maintained (independent) schools in England and Wales. However, figures for Scotland and Northern Ireland cover only maintained schools (grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland).

Given the different qualifications systems and headline measures outlined in the box above, it is not suitable to present a comparative picture of pupil performance across the four UK countries. The following subsections provide an overview of pupil performance against the respective national measures.

**Figure 3.1 National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)**

<b>NQF</b>	<b>Entry Level</b>	<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Level 5</b>	<b>Level 6</b>	<b>Level 7</b>	<b>Level 8</b>
	Entry level awards, certificates or diplomas	GCSE grades D-G / 1-3	GCSE grades A*-C / 4-9	AS and A levels	Certificate of Higher Education	Diploma of Higher Education, Foundation Degree	Honours Degree	Master's degree	Doctorate
<b>SCQF</b>	<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Level 5</b>	<b>Level 6</b>			
	National 1	National 2	National 3	National 4	National 5	Higher			
	<b>Level 7</b>	<b>Level 8</b>	<b>Level 9</b>	<b>Level 10</b>	<b>Level 11</b>	<b>Level 12</b>			
	Advanced Higher, Certificate of Higher Education	Diploma of Higher Education	Bachelors, Ordinary Degree	Honours Degree, Graduate Diploma	Master's Degree	Doctorate			

## GCSE (or equivalent) attainment in England (Tables 3.2a(i) and 3.2a(ii))

The average Attainment 8 score per pupil in 2017 is 44.6. This has decreased by 3.9 points since 2016 (Table 3.2a(i)). These decreases are as expected following changes to the 2017 point scores assigned to grades because of the introduction of 9 to 1 GCSEs in performance tables<sup>5</sup>. This measure reflects attainment at the first attempt only.

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<b>Higher attainment rates for girls</b>	Girls (47.6) achieved a higher attainment 8 score than boys (41.8).
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<b>Sciences and classical studies have the highest percentage of passes</b>	The subjects with the highest percentages of passes at grade A*-C were physics, biological science and classical studies all with a pass rate of 91%.
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## A level attainment in England (3.3a(i) and 3.3a(ii))

In 2016/17, 56.9% of the population aged 17 in England achieved at least two substantial level 3 passes<sup>6</sup> (Table 3.3a(i)).

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<b>Higher A level attainment rates for girls</b>	More girls achieved a pass at grade A*-C than boys in all subject groups with the exception of chemistry, other sciences, computer studies, accounting and finance, business studies and modern languages (Table 3.3a(ii)). The largest differences were in physical education (17 percentage points), ICT, psychology and media/film/television studies (11 percentage points).
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<b>Mathematics and English (including English literature) were the most frequently studied subjects</b>	Mathematics (84,200 entries) and English (including English literature) (71,000 entries) were the most frequently studied subjects. Further mathematics (89%), modern languages (88%) and classical studies (87%) had the highest percentages of passes at grades A*-C.
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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2016-to-2017>

<sup>6</sup> The percentage is calculated by dividing the total numbers of pupils achieving at least two substantial level 3 passes in 2016/17 (typically aged 16-18 at the start of the academic year) by the total population aged 17 at the start of the academic year. Substantial level 3 qualifications are defined as qualifications that are at least the size of an A level (180 guided learning hours per year), such as a BTEC subsidiary diploma level 3, and which count in the 16-18 performance tables. If a qualification is equal in size to 2 A levels it is counted as 2 substantial level 3 qualifications. Information on the qualifications that count in the 16-18 performance tables is available in the 16-19 technical guide: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-accountability-headline-measures-technical-guide>

## GCSE (or equivalent) attainment in Wales (Tables 3.2b(i) and 3.2b(ii))

In 2016/17, 54.6% of pupils in their last year of compulsory education in Wales achieved 5 or more GCSE (or equivalent) passes at grade A\*-C including English and mathematics (Table 3.2b(i)). This includes resits. There have been a significant number of changes to this performance measure and therefore the figure for 2016/17 is not directly comparable to 2015/16<sup>7</sup>.

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### Higher GCSE attainment rates for girls

Girls outperformed boys with 58.8% of girls and 50.7% of boys achieving 5 or more GCSE (or equivalent) passes at grade A\*-C including English and mathematics (Table 3.2b(i)).

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### Chemistry, biological science and physics have the highest percentage of passes

The subjects with the highest percentages of passes at grade A\*-C were physics (91%), biological science (90%) and chemistry (90%) (Table 3.2b(ii)).

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## A level attainment in Wales (Tables 3.3b(i) and 3.3b(ii))

In 2016/17, 27.4% of the population aged 17 in Wales passed two or more A levels (or equivalent)<sup>8 9</sup> (Table 3.3b(i)). This does not include students in Further Education Colleges.

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### Higher A level attainment rates for girls

Girls outperformed boys with 31.2% of girls and 23.8% of boys achieving two or more passes (Table 3.3b(i)).

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### Most popular subjects are mathematics, English and history

Mathematics (2,300 entries), English (including English literature) and history (both 2,000 entries) were the most frequently studied subjects. Further mathematics (89%) and history and drama (86%) had the highest percentages of passes at grades A\*-C (Table 3.3b(ii)).

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<sup>7</sup> There have been a number of changes to performance measures in Wales from 2017. For further information see: <https://digitalanddata.blog.gov.wales/2017/12/06/chief-statisticians-update-understanding-changes-to-education-data/>

<sup>8</sup> The percentage is calculated by dividing the total numbers of pupils attaining two or more A levels in 2015/16 (typically aged 16-18 at the start of the academic year) by the total population aged 17 at the start of the academic year.

<sup>9</sup> Further Education Colleges are not included.

## GCSE (or equivalent) attainment in Northern Ireland (Tables 3.2d(i) and 3.2d(ii))

In 2016/17, 70.3% of pupils in their last year of compulsory education in Northern Ireland achieved 5 or more GCSE (or equivalent) passes at grade A\*-C including English and mathematics (Table 3.2d(i)). This figure has increased from 67.9% in 2015/16.

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<b>Higher GCSE attainment rates for girls</b>	Girls outperformed boys with 73.8% of girls and 66.8% of boys achieving 5 or more GCSE (or equivalent) passes at grade A*-C including English and mathematics (Table 3.2d(i)).
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<b>Physics and other science have the highest percentage of passes</b>	The subjects with the highest percentages of passes at grade A*-C were physics (97%), chemistry and economics (both 95%) (Table 3.2d(ii)).
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## A level attainment in Northern Ireland (Tables 3.3d(i) and 3.3d(ii))

In 2016/17, 52.2% of the 17-year-old population in Northern Ireland passed two or more A levels (or equivalent) at grades A\*-E<sup>10</sup> (Table 3.3d(i)).

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<b>Higher A level attainment rates for girls</b>	Girls outperformed boys with 60.5% of girls and 44.2% of boys achieving two or more passes (Table 3.3d(i)).
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<b>Most popular subjects are mathematics and biological science</b>	Mathematics (3,000 entries) and biological science (2,700 entries) were the most frequently studied subjects (Table 3.3d(ii)). Further mathematics (96%) and business studies, art and design and modern languages (92%) had the highest percentages of passes at grades A*-C.
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<sup>10</sup> The percentage is calculated by dividing the total numbers of pupils attaining two or more A levels in 2015/16 (typically aged 16-18 at the start of the academic year) by the total population aged 17 at the start of the academic year.

## Qualifications achieved by school leavers in Scotland (Table 3.1)

Figure 3.2 shows the percentage of school leavers (those who left at the end of the school year who will have left at various stages of their schooling) attaining one or more Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) qualifications. The percentage of school leavers attaining one or more SCQF qualifications at level 6 or above decreased from 61.7% in 2015/16 to 61.2 in 2016/17.

**Figure 3.2: Percentage of school leavers attaining one or more SCQF qualifications (2012/13 to 2016/17)**

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Percentage of school leavers attaining					
1 or more qualifications at SCQF level 4 or better	96.3	96.3	96.2	96.3	96.3
1 or more qualifications at SCQF level 5 or better	82.7	84.3	85.2	85.6	86.1
1 or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 or better	55.8	58.1	60.2	61.7	61.2

### Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) attainment at level 5 or better (Tables 3.2c(i) and 3.2c(ii))

In 2016/17, 86.1% of school leavers in Scotland obtained one or more qualifications at SCQF level 5 or better (Table 3.2c(i)).

#### Higher SCQF level 5 attainment rates for girls

Girls outperformed boys with 88.2% of girls and 84.1% of boys gaining one or more qualifications at SCQF level 5 or better (Table 3.2c(i)).

#### Most popular subjects are mathematics and English

The most frequently studied subjects in terms of examination entries for all learners at SCQF levels 3-5 were mathematics (83,400 entries) and English (66,400 entries) (Table 3.2c(ii)).

### Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) attainment at level 6 or better (Tables 3.3c(i) and 3.3c(ii))

In 2016/17, 61.2% of school leavers in Scotland obtained one or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 or better (Table 3.3c(i)).

#### Higher SCQF level 6 attainment rates for girls

Girls outperformed boys with 67.2% of girls and 55.5% of boys gaining one or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 or better (Table 3.3c(i)).

#### Most popular subjects are mathematics and English

The most frequently studied subjects in terms of examination entries for all learners at SCQF level 6 were English (36,500 entries) and mathematics (18,800 entries) (Table 3.3c(ii)). The percentages of passes at grade A for these subjects were 26% for English and 31% for mathematics.

## Highest qualification held by working age adults (Table 3.4)

In 2017, 44% of the UK population aged between 19 and 64 had a qualification at NQF level 4 or above. 42% of males aged between 19 and 64 years had a qualification at NQF level 4 or above, compared to 46% of similarly aged females. The percentage of 19-64 year olds with a qualification at NQF level 4 or above was highest among the 30-39 age group at 52%. The percentage of 19 to 64 year olds in England, Wales and Northern Ireland with a qualification at NQF level 4 or above were 44%, 37% and 34% respectively. 47% of 19 to 64 year olds in Scotland had a qualification at SCQF level 7 or better<sup>11,12</sup> (Table 3.4).

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<sup>11</sup> Qualification statistics for England are calculated using a different methodology to those for other UK countries and are not directly comparable.

<sup>12</sup> SCQF levels used in Scotland are not directly comparable to NQF levels used in England/Wales/Northern Ireland. Figures relating to level 7 have been provided as the closest match to NQF level 4. Figures for the UK have been calculated using the NQF levels assigned to Scottish qualifications in the Labour Force Survey. Further information can be found at [www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean](http://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean) and [https://www.sqa.org.uk/files\\_ccc/readyreckoner.html](https://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/readyreckoner.html)



## 4. Education Expenditure (Table 4)

Total (central government and local authority) expenditure on education in 2017/18 was £86.9 billion, a reduction in real terms of 3.6% compared to 2012/13 (Table 4). As a percentage of GDP, government expenditure on education has decreased over the period from 2012/13 to 2017/18 from 4.9% to 4.2%.

Whilst the majority of education expenditure in 2017/18 is delivered through local government (51.7%), this share has decreased in the last five years (down from 59.1% in 2012/13). The distribution of government funding across the phases of education has remained broadly similar over the past five years. The share of total government expenditure on primary education (31.2%) is at a similar level as in 2012/13, when it was 32.0%. The share of total government expenditure on secondary education (47.9%) has risen over the same period from 44.5% in 2012/13. There has been a decrease in the share of the total government expenditure on tertiary education (from 9.8% in 2012/13 to 7.3% in 2017/18). In 2017/18, secondary education received the largest share of the total (44.5%) followed by primary (31.2%).

## 5. Accompanying tables

The following tables are available in Excel format on the [department's website](#).

<b>Schools</b>		<b>Qualifications</b>	
1	Number of schools, by type of school	3.1	GCSE, A level, SCE/NQ and vocational qualifications obtained by pupils and students
1.2	Full-time and part-time pupils by age, gender and school type	3.2a(i)	GCSE and vocational qualifications obtained by pupils at the end of key stage 4 by gender
1.2.1	Full-time and part-time pupils by gender and school type	3.2a(ii)	GCSE entries and achievements for pupils at the end of key stage 4 by subject and gender
1.2.2	Full-time and part-time pupils by age, gender and school type (Time series)	3.2b(i)	GCSE and vocational qualifications obtained by pupils in their last year of compulsory education by gender
1.3	Qualified teachers by type of school and gender	3.2b(ii)	GCSE entries and achievements for pupils in their last year of compulsory education by subject and gender
1.4	Pupil: teacher ratios (PTRs) and pupil: adult ratios (PARs) within schools, by type of school	3.2c(i)	SQA Qualifications obtained by school leavers
<b>Post compulsory education</b>		3.2c(ii)	SQA qualifications entries and achievements at SCQF levels 3-5 by subject, all learners
2.1	Number of establishments of further and higher education by type, and full-time academic staff by gender	3.2d(i)	GCSE and vocational qualifications obtained by pupils in their last year of compulsory education by gender
2.2	Students in higher education by level, mode of study, gender and subject group	3.2d(ii)	GCSE entries and achievements for pupils in their last year of compulsory education by subject and gender
2.2.1	Home and Overseas Students in higher education by mode of study, gender and subject group	3.3a(i)	A level and equivalent vocational qualifications obtained by young people in Schools and Further Education Colleges by gender
2.3	Students in further education by country of study, mode of study, gender and age,	3.3a(ii)	A level and equivalent vocational qualifications obtained by young people in Schools and Further Education Colleges by gender
2.4	Students in further education by gender and higher education, by gender, level of study and mode of attendance	3.3b(i)	A level and equivalent vocational qualifications obtained by young people in schools by gender
2.5	People aged from 16 to 24 Not in Education, Employment or Training ('NEET') by gender	3.3b(ii)	A level entries and achievements for young people in schools by gender and subject
		3.3c(i)	SQA qualifications obtained by school leavers
		3.3c(ii)	SQA qualifications entries and achievements at SCQF level 6 (Highers) by subject, all learners

## Qualifications

- 3.3d(ii) A level entries and achievements for young people in schools by gender and subject
- 3.4 Highest qualification held by working age adults, by gender and age

## Education Expenditure

- 4 Education expenditure on services

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When reviewing the tables, please note that:

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### Rounding conventions and suppression

The National Statistics Code of Practice requires that reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that all published or disseminated statistics produced by the Department for Education protect confidentiality.

In most tables the figures are presented as whole numbers while in some tables, percentages are displayed to 1 decimal point. The rounding convention is as follows: any fractions of 0.5 and above will be rounded up, anything less than 0.5 will be rounded down.

The following conventions have been used in the tables:

- . not applicable
- .. not available
- nil or negligible
- x suppressed because of small numbers

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## 6. National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The Department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

## 7. Technical Information

An additional document accompanies this publication providing further information on the education systems in each country and detail of the data sources used in producing the data.

## 8. Get in touch

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Department  
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